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# MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

UPON

THE SUBJECT OF THE FURNITURE NECESSARY

FOR THE

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, &c.

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FEBRUARY 10, 1818.

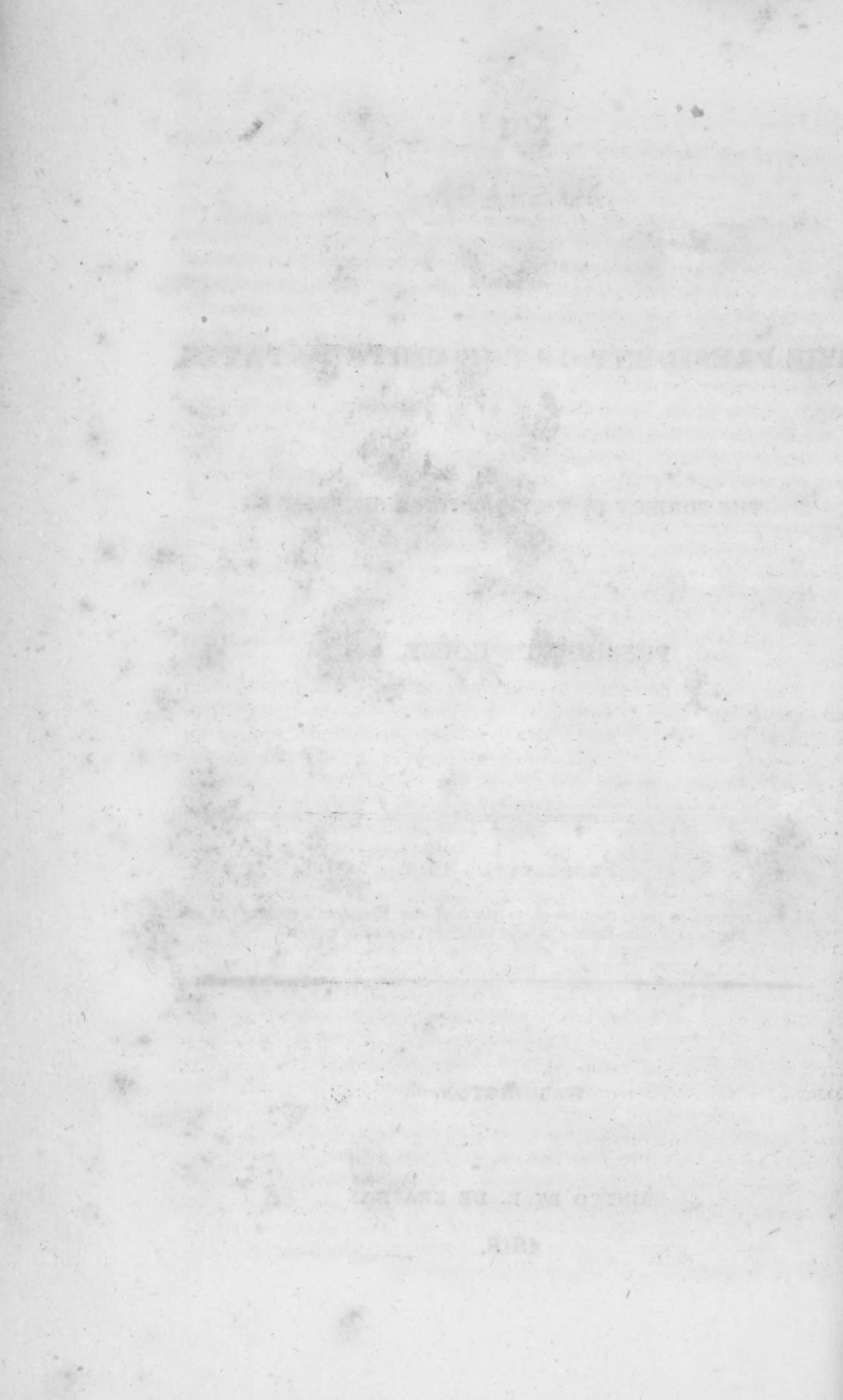
Read, and referred to the committee on so much of the President's message as relates to Public Buildings, and additional executive offices.

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WASHINGTON:

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1818.



*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.*

As the house appropriated for the President of the United States, will be finished this year, it is thought to merit the attention of Congress, in what manner it should be furnished, and what measures ought to be adopted for the safe-keeping of the furniture in future. All the public furniture provided before 1811, having been destroyed with the public building in that year, and little afterwards procured, owing to the inadequacy of the appropriation, it has become necessary to provide almost every article, requisite for such an establishment; whence, the sum to be expended, will be much greater than at any former period. The furniture in its kind and extent is thought to be an object, not less deserving attention than the building for which it is intended. Both being national objects, each seems to have an equal claim to legislative sanction. The disbursement of the public money, too, ought, it is presumed, to be in like manner provided for by law. The person who may happen to be placed, by the suffrage of his fellow citizens, in this high trust, having no personal interest in these concerns, should be exempted from undue responsibility respecting them.

For a building so extensive, intended for a purpose exclusively national, in which, in the furniture provided for it, a mingled regard is due to the simplicity and purity of our institutions, and to the character of the people who are represented in it, the sum already appropriated, has proved altogether inadequate. The present is therefore, a proper time for Congress to take the subject into consideration, with a view to all the objects claiming attention, and to regulate it by law. On a knowledge of the furniture procured, and the sum expended for it, a just estimate may be formed, regarding the extent of the building, of what will still be wanting to furnish the house. Many of the articles being of a durable nature, may be handed down through a long series of service; and being of great value, such as plate, ought not to be left altogether, and at all times, to the care of servants alone. It seems to be advisable that a public agent should be charged with it, during the occasional absences of the President, and have authority to transfer it from one President to another, and likewise to make reports of occasional deficiencies, as the basis on which further provision should be made.

It may also merit consideration, whether it may not be proper to commit the care of the public buildings, particularly the President's house and the Capitol, with the grounds belonging to them, including, likewise, the furniture of the latter, in a more especial manner, to a public agent. Hitherto the charge of this valuable property seems to have been connected with the structure of the buildings, and committed to those employed in it. This guard will necessarily

cease when the buildings are finished, at which time, the interest in them, will be proportionally augmented. It is presumed, that this trust is, in a certain degree at least, incidental to the other duties of the superintendent of the public buildings; but it may merit consideration, whether it will not be proper to charge him with it more explicitly, and to give him authority to employ one or more persons under him for these purposes.

JAMES MONROE.

*Washington, February 10th, 1818.*